

Claims:

We claim:

5        1. An independently positionable key switch, comprising:  
a key base including a key cap receiving opening and at least one gripping feature  
operative to facilitate gripping of the key base; and  
an actuatable key cap arranged in the key receiving opening of the key base, the key cap  
being actuatable between an unactuated position and an actuated position.

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2. The key switch according to claim 1, wherein the at least one gripping feature  
comprises at least one of a side scoop, surface texture and surface contour.

3. The key switch according to claim 2, wherein the surface contour comprises at least  
15 one of grooves and ridges and the surface texture comprises at least one of bumps and  
depressions.

4. The key switch according to claim 1, wherein the at least one gripping feature  
comprises at least one side scoop, wherein the side scoop does not extend to the key cap  
20 receiving opening.

5. The key switch according to claim 1, wherein the at least one gripping feature  
comprises two side scoops arranged on opposite sides of the key base.

6. The key switch according to claim 5, wherein the side scoops do not extend to the key cap receiving opening.

5        7. The key switch according to claim 5, further comprising:  
a key base extension arranged between the side scoops and the key cap receiving opening.

8. The key switch according to claim 5, wherein the side scoops have a size sufficient to  
10 permit gripping of the key base and removal of the key base from a surface without gripping the key cap.

9. The key switch according to claim 5, wherein a distance between the side scoops and the key cap receiving opening is sufficient to prevent gripping of the key cap when the side  
15 scoops are gripped to remove the key switch from or place the key switch on a surface.

10. The key switch according to claim 1, wherein the at least one gripping feature comprises at least one side scoop and at least gripping feature on a surface of the side scoop.

20        11. The key switch according to claim 1, wherein at least one portion of a side wall of the key base has a lower height than all other portions of all other side walls of the key base.

12. The key switch according to claim 11, wherein two opposite portions of the side

walls of the key base have a lower height.

13. The key switch according to claim 11, wherein the lowered portion of the side wall  
of the key base has a height sufficient to minimize engagement with the key base as the key cap  
5 is actuated.

14. The key switch according to claim 1, further comprising;  
a key dome arranged within the key cap and the key base, the key dome comprising a  
flexible operative to bias the key cap in an unactuated position.

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15. The key switch according to claim 1, further comprising:  
guiding elements operative to guide the key cap as it is actuated.

16. The key switch according to claim 15, wherein the guiding elements comprise a post  
15 on one of the key base and the key cap and a post receiving collar on another of the key base and  
the key cap.

17. The key switch according to claim 15, wherein the guiding elements comprise at  
least one tab on at least one of the key base and the key cap and at least one tab receiving recess  
20 including a tab stop on another of the key base and the key cap.

18. The key switch according to claim 1, further comprising:  
an adhesive on a bottom surface of the key base, the adhesive operative to secure the key

base on a surface.

19. The key switch according to claim 1, further comprising:

at least one label on at least one of the key base and the key cap, the at least one label

5 indicating at least one of key identity and key function.

20. The key switch according to claim 19, wherein the at least one label is remotely modifiable.

10 21. The key switch according to claim 19, wherein the at least one label comprises an electronic display.

22. The key switch according to claim 1, wherein the key cap and the key base are connectable without additional attached parts.

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23. The key switch according to claim 1, further comprising:

an RF circuit coil.

24. The key switch according to claim 23, wherein the RF circuit coil is arranged in the

20 key base.

25. The key switch according to claim 25, further comprising:

a resonant switch arranged on the key cap and operative to affect the inductance or

capacitance of the RF circuit coil as the key cap is actuated, wherein when the key cap is in an unactuated position it does not affect the inductance or capacitance of the RF circuit coil.

26. The key switch according to claim 1, further comprising:

5 a printed circuit board comprising an RF circuit coil, a switch and an integrated circuit;

and

a switch closing element operative to close the switch.

27. The key switch according to claim 26, wherein the switch closing element is

10 arranged on the key cap.

28. The key switch according to claim 26, further comprising;

a key dome arranged within the key cap and the key base, the key dome comprising a flexible operative to bias the key cap in an unactuated position, wherein the switch closing

15 element is arranged on the key dome.

29. The key switch according to claim 1, wherein programming and testing of functioning of the key are carried out by assembling the key.

20 30. A method for assembling, programming and testing a key switch, the key switch comprising a key base including a key cap receiving opening, an actuatable key cap arranged in the key receiving opening, and an inductive resonant circuit, the method comprising:

placing the key base in functional proximity to a reader;

assembling the key cap and the key base; and  
actuating resonant circuit during the assembly step.

31. An independently positionable key switch, comprising:

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a key base;

an actuatable key cap operatively connected to the key base, the key cap being actuatable  
between an unactuated position and an actuated position; and

at least one of an identity indicator and a status indicator associated at least one of the key  
cap and the key base.

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32. An independently positionable key switch, comprising:

a key base;

an actuatable key cap operatively connected to the key base, the key cap being actuatable  
between an unactuated position and an actuated position; and

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a coil of a resonant radio frequency inductive circuit incorporated in or on one of the key  
base and the key cap.

33. A method for switching a radio frequency inductive circuit, the method comprising:  
bringing the circuit into and out of resonance.